



Weekly Activity Update

August 21 - August 27 • 2005 • Issue 100

Democracy and Governance: Elections Programming

On August 17, USAID visited a National Democratic Institute (NDI) training session in Jalalabad City, Nangarhar province. Funded by USAID, the NDI office in Jalalabad trains all parliamentary candidates in the eastern region of Afghanistan on campaign tactics and ethics in the entire eastern region of Afghanistan.

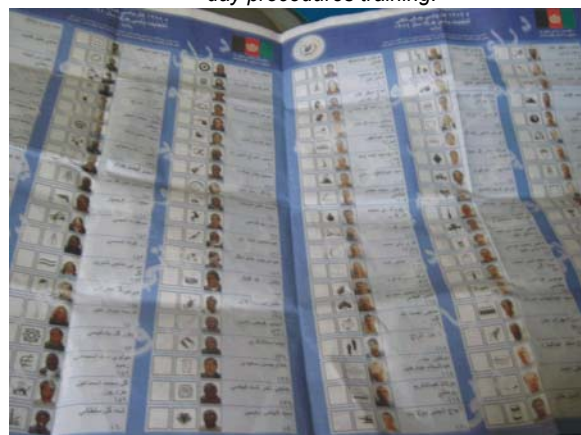
To date, NDI has trained 175 candidates, 18 political parties, and more than 1,500 candidate agents in Jalalabad. It is expected that the "candidate agents," defined as candidate supporters, will share their newly acquired information with their local communities when they return home. Prior to the September 18 elections, NDI will train an additional 9,000 candidate agents on election day procedures.

Every participant in the NDI training session receives an "Election Campaign Training" book including the election campaign training manual, the Afghan constitution, the electoral laws, various election regulations, the Joint Electoral Management Body election timelines, and fact sheets on the Parliament and local councils.

In addition to candidate and candidate agent training, USAID continues to support capacity building of relevant groups in basic election administration. Recently, USAID conducted training for the Provincial Electoral Commissioners and their secretaries in Mazar-E Sharif and Kabul. Also, USAID funded similar training for the National Electoral Complaints Commissioners and the National Election Media Commissioners in early August.



Candidates and candidate agents receive election day procedures training.



Sample ballot for the September Parliamentary elections. For each candidate, the ballot includes name, symbol and picture.

Improving Quality of Higher Education

On August 17, USAID donated equipment for a materials testing laboratory to Kabul University, College of Engineering and Architecture. This \$64,800 donation (including almost 800 individual items) will benefit approximately 500 engineering students. A second donation of equal value and items was sent to Kandahar University, College of Engineering. USAID is also funding a computer laboratory, including 10 computers with Computer Aided Drafting capability (CAD) at Kabul University, College of Engineering. All of the abovementioned projects are funded through the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) Quick Impact Program.

In light of the historic partnership between Kabul University, College of Engineering and Architecture, and U.S. universities, the U.S.G. is allocating more than \$1 million this year for Kabul University to support the restoration of this prominent technical center of learning.



Engineering students and Kabul University staff unload the USAID-donated material testing laboratory equipment.

Increasing Capacity of Ministry of Agriculture

Since 2002, numerous development agencies have become involved in the agricultural and natural resource management sectors of Afghanistan's economy through the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Food (MAAHF). After 25 years of conflict, the Ministry lacked the capacity to develop the appropriate policies, strategies and programs, and was unable to attract direct donor funding.

In response to a recent request from the Afghan Minister of Agriculture, USAID created an Institutional Capacity Building Program to facilitate his goals for the MAAHF. USAID is providing a cadre of senior advisors and technical specialists to work closely with the Minister to develop a Master Plan for the agriculture sector and to prepare a long-term development strategy.

In addition, the technical team will assist the Ministry to rebuild the agricultural sector by addressing key policies, the most challenging institutional constraints that impede market-led growth in agriculture and the use of natural resources in a sustainable manner. Other key donors have responded to the Minister's request and together with USAID, have formed an effective, collaborative team working with the MAAHF.

Restructuring the MAAHF and accelerating growth of the agricultural sector is a challenge. Under the Minister's leadership and with the support of international donor community, Afghanistan should be able to develop a dynamic agricultural economy that capitalizes on opportunities offered by the globalization of markets and new technological developments.

Security Incidents

Number of Hostile Attacks: For this reporting period, there were five hostile attacks and one peaceful demonstration, in which 2 directly affected USAID operations. There was four persons killed, two injured and one kidnapped.

Recent Incidents: A US Protection & Investigations, LLC (USPI) Convoy has been attacked by insurgents on the Kandahar - Herat Road. The convoy was fired upon and three persons were reported dead and one person has been kidnapped. Authorities have been notified, including American Military Forces. USPI provides security for USAID road activities.

